



# The Florida House of Representatives

**Chris Sprowls**  
Speaker

## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Florida House of Representatives Unveils New Worlds Reading Initiative During Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!**

*Announced Legislation to Deliver Books Direct to Students at Home and Separate Partnership to  
Provide Immediate, Free Access to Digital Library of Books for all Florida Children*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** (January 28, 2021) -- Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives Chris Sprowls (R-Palm Harbor), alongside House colleagues, representatives from Age of Learning and the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) today unveiled the New Worlds Reading Initiative during a virtual press conference.

The News Worlds Reading Initiative, House Bill 3, is designed to help improve literacy rates through Florida's first-ever statewide book delivery and parental-engagement program. It was filed today in the Florida House by Representative Dana Lee Trubusly (R-Fort Pierce).

Also announced, a separate and strategic partnership with Age of Learning will immediately provide quality literacy resources to Florida families. This partnership offers every Florida family FREE access, through Dec. 31, 2021, to a comprehensive digital library of books at [ReadingIQ.com/newworlds](https://ReadingIQ.com/newworlds).

This announcement comes during Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!

### **House Bill 3**

"The Florida House of Representatives is excited to unveil today the News Worlds Reading Initiative during Literacy Week," said Speaker Sprowls. "We all know how essential it is for

children to have access to books to foster a lifelong passion for learning and put them on a pathway to success, and we are confident that this initiative, which will provide books for children and key programming for parents, will dramatically improve literacy rates in our state. This legislation has come to life thanks to the hard work of Chairman Chris Latvala and our bill sponsor, Representative Dana Lee Trabulsy.”

HB 3 includes provisions to offer the first statewide program in Florida to deliver free books to elementary school students who are identified as struggling readers. It calls for an organization to administer the program statewide and contract with a book distribution organization to deliver books to eligible students. As part of the program, the bill requires that support materials be provided to parents to help them engage their children in reading.

Participating school districts must work with local organizations that raise awareness and funds for the book distribution program. The bill directs the state organization to provide 50% of the program cost, with the remaining funds generated at the local level.

“When passed by the Florida Legislature, this landmark legislation will be the first statewide book delivery and parental-engagement program ever deployed in the state,” said House Education & Employment Committee Chairman Chris Latvala (R-Clearwater). “The fact is, today, nearly half of students beginning in elementary school are not academically prepared for kindergarten, and 43 percent of Florida’s 3rd grade students are reading below grade level based on statewide assessments. This is an alarming statistic, because 88 percent of students who do not graduate from high school struggled with reading in 3rd grade. In order to help reverse this pattern, we believe that parents must be empowered to provide an engaging home environment that is filled with opportunities for reading, which is exactly what this legislation is designed to do.”

“I am thrilled to be rolling out House Bill 3 during Literacy Week,” said Representative Trabulsy. “This legislation will work to improve literacy in our school children by identifying struggling readers and getting hard-copy books into their hands, as well as equipping parents with tools to help ensure success. We are excited to be hearing the bill soon and for the ensuing discussion on how important reading is to our state’s children for their future success.”

“The New Worlds Reading Initiative is a brilliant and one-of-a-kind program that will directly impact students and empower parents,” said Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills), sponsor of the Senate companion bill. “It is vital to the success of our children and our state for us to make gains in literacy rates. This initiative will have an immediate, positive effect on that goal.”

### **Partnership for Free Digital Books**

“I want to extend a sincere thank you to Age of Learning, the creators of ReadingIQ, which has generously partnered with us to provide immediate, free access to their digital library,” said Speaker Sprowls.

Starting today, all Florida families can visit [ReadingIQ.com/newworlds](https://www.readingiq.com/newworlds) and set up their free account to access a comprehensive digital library.

## **[WATCH/DOWNLOAD PROMO VIDEO]**

“Age of Learning is excited to support the New Worlds Reading Initiative through our ReadingIQ program,” said Paul Candland, CEO of Age of Learning. “The easy-to-access ReadingIQ platform will immediately provide Florida’s children with thousands of high quality titles from popular publishers that help them build and grow a love of reading, all while improving comprehension and literacy. This resource will also allow parents to develop a better understanding of their children’s current reading level and progress through the assessment feature of ReadingIQ, while ensuring each child has access to books that match his or her interests and level.”

“Access to educational services and resources is critical to student success. Any program that allows parents to spend time at home reading with their children, and extends the learning day, is a positive for our students,” said Dr. Michael Grego, president of FADSS and superintendent of Pinellas County Schools. “Through the PCS Connects 1:1 program, all Pinellas County Schools students receive a take-home laptop or tablet, so they will be able to use these resources. Thank you to Speaker Sprowls and the Florida Legislature for their commitment to public education and to the students and families of our state.”

“Reading is fundamental to building better communities, teaching our youth and inspiring future success,” said Rep. Vance Aloupis (R-Miami-Dade), Chairman of the Early Learning & Elementary Education Subcommittee and CEO of The Children’s Movement of Florida. “I am so pleased to see the Florida House of Representatives forming an initiative that, like the work and movement I’ve been a part of for more than a decade, values early education and literacy skills and provides children with pathways to read and grow.”

“As we celebrate Literacy Week, we know it is equally important to put words into action,” said Speaker Sprowls. “Today, the Florida House is truly making strides to ensure that 2021 is the year of reading in Florida.”

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